DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 885 CS 502 592

AUTHOR Savage, Arthur L., Jr.; And Others
TITLE Leadership and Employee Attitudes: A Study in a Television Setting.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Speech Communication Association (Biloxi, Mississippi, April 11-14, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Commercial Television; Employee Attitudes; Employer Employee Relationship; *Job Satisfaction; Labor Turnover; *Leadership; *Organizational Communication; Personnel Management; Supervisory Methods; *Television Research; *Work Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Five hundred two employees of 20 television stations (47% response rate) completed a 90-item questionnaire in a study designed to determine their level of job satisfaction as well as the extent to which their perceptions of organizational and interpersonal relationships were similar to those reported in previous studies by employees of other commercial enterprises. The job satisfaction variables examined were task simplicity, instrumental and supportive leader behavior, need for achievement and for autonomy, satisfaction with work and with supervisor, and beliefs about the effect of degree of effort on quality of performance and attainment of rewards. Analysis of the data indicated that the employees' job-related attitudes were not notably different from those of persons employed in other enterprises, that persons who perceived their jobs as relatively simple had generally low levels of job satisfaction, that those subordinates whose leaders were perceived to be friendly and supportive were significantly more satisfied with their jobs and supervisors than those whose leaders were not so perceived, and that employees with a high need for achievement were relatively satisfied with their work. The study provides a basis for the inference that improved management techniques that have created more positive employee attitudes in other areas might have the same result in television stations, providing a possible solution to the currently high turnover rate among television station employees. (GT)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED173885

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES:

A STUDY IN A TELEVISION SETTING

Arthur L. Savage, Jr.
School of Radio Television
Ohio University

John E. Stinson
Department of Management
Ohio University

Susan E. Beckley
Department of Broadcast and Film Communication
The University of Alabama

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Arthur L. Savage, Jr.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS502592

INTRODUCTION

"The gross is up, but the net is down."

This is the response one often gets at the present time from general managers of commercial television stations when one inquires about business conditions. The statement is most often interpreted to mean that while revenues are increasing, operating expenses are increasing at a more rapid rate, producing a smaller pre-tax profit.

Many factors could contribute to the diminishing profit picture, but a recent study finds that the abnormally high turnover rate among employees of television stations may contribute to the situation in a significant way.

Fulmer and Bensman report on the turnover rates among station employees.[1] They quote from a study conducted over a two year period (1973-1974) that some television stations experience a turnover rate as high as 33%. They point out in a quote from Kitross that, "No industry can hope to operate successfully when it must continually hire and train new employees. . . ."[2] In support of this notion, they state that the training of new sales and administrative personnel alone may cost the television industry as much as $30 million per annum. They also report that the television industry paid out approximately $5 million in 1977 in unemployment taxes.

In the same study, Fulmer and Bensman categorized employee turnover as "controllable" and "uncontrollable," implying that the employer is wholly responsible for some of

the reasons why employees leave their jobs. They categorize controllable resignations as those due to "low pay, personality conflicts, poor working conditions, and insufficient recognition." To indicate the extent of controllable resignations, their study reports that 75% of the station managers they surveyed stated that 60% of their resignations were employee initiated, and that 40% of the managers stated that 90% of their resignations were employee initiated. They conclude with the following observation:

> It is obvious that the turnover rate in the television industry is excessive. Management that seeks to keep costs down to maximize profits must become more aware of this problem area.

It has been the observed experience in other businesses and industries that those conditions which lead to employee dissatisfaction and subsequent resignation can be kept to a minimum by improved management techniques. The question emerges from the consideration: could improved management techniques prove to be successful in a commercial television station?

The literature dealing with leadership behavior and employee attitudes was thoroughly searched to determine if studies had been undertaken in commercial broadcast stations which would indicate enough similarity between them and the loci of other industrial studies. If so, it would permit an inference of similarity between commercial television stations and the settings to which the application of improved management

techniques had produced increased employee satisfaction and, ergo, less employee turnover.

While the literature in the field of organizational behavior well supports the notion that changes and improvements in management techniques have the effect of increasing employee satisfaction with their positions and work roles, none of those studies have been done in a commercial television setting. As a matter of fact, the search of the literature indicated that the topic of broadcast station management has received relatively little attention from scholars and/or researchers in the field. Indeed, it indicates that the field is untouched with reference to leadership style and worker satisfaction.

One notable study of broadcast station management was done by Rhea.[3] This study sought to determine whether or not specific differences existed in the management styles of television station managers and departmental supervisors. Subordinates were asked to rate their superiors as to specific leadership style, but, in this instance, such significant variables as job satisfaction, employee performance expectancies, and task variables were not observed.

In 1959, the Association for Professional Broadcast Education (APBE) and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) conjointly undertook a survey of station general managers, employees, and former employees.[4] It provided basic statistical information on the background and histories of those who work in broadcasting. The report made to the APBE and the NAB in April, 1962, indicated that most (85%) of station employees

thought their stations well managed; that 75% of the employees thought their compensation to be adequate; and that 70% of the employees thought their supervisors to be satisfactory.

Bennett studied the communication behavior of 52 radio and television station managers in relation to their management style.[5]

Only one study was found that dealt with management style per se. An unpublished doctoral dissertation by Oyewale examined leadership styles in educational stations as perceived by subordinates.[6] The study was not extended to include an investigation of these variables in commercial stations.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It was not felt by the researchers that one could infer categorically that the improved management techniques which had proved successful in other entreprenural settings could be applied to television stations. The studies which had proved the ability of improved management techniques to increase subordinate job statisfaction and motivation had been done in settings in which the organizational and interpersonal relationships were thought to be notably different from the typical television station. The studies had been done among blue-collar manual laborers, in governmental and military settings, and in hospitals. It was felt that these differed from the typical television station in that the former were generally characterized by a more bureaucratic organizational structure and a more highly formal communication network within the organization. It has been the observation of one of the researchers, based on over

twenty years of professional experience with television stations, that the station's organizational structure is relatively loose, the relationships between supervisor and subordinate at all levels of station hierarchy are usually informal with few, if any, strictly enforced communication linkages.

The purpose of this study was to select a number of testable variables which are related to overall job satisfaction, to elicit responses across this array of variables, and to compare these relationships with relationships observed in similar studies in settings other than television stations. If the responses from this study were comparable to those obtained in other settings, then it would be possible to infer that the same improved management techniques which had been successful in the other settings would quite likely be successful in television stations.

The variables selected for examination were: task simplicity, instrumental leader behavior, supportive leader behavior, need for achievement, need for autonomy, satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervisor, and expectancy I and expectancy II.

For the purpose of establishing a common referent, the following definitions are provided:

--Task simplicity - extent to which task is structured, repetitive, non-autonomous.

--Instrumental leader behavior - clarifying role expectation, assigning specific tasks, and specifying procedures to be followed.

--Supportive leader behavior - friendly and approachable, considerate of needs of followers.

--Need for achievement - desire to do best work when assignments are fairly different; desire to take moderate risks to get ahead; desire to assume additional responsibilities, and to perform better than co-workers.

--Need for autonomy - desire to be one's own boss; to do one's work and let others do their's; to work alone on a job.

--Satisfaction with supervisor - positive, affective orientation of the follower toward his supervisor.

--Expectancy I - effort-performance perception; the belief that a high degree of effort will lead to a high degree of performance.

--Expectancy II - performance-reward perception; the belief that a high degree of performance will lead to both intrinsic and extrinsic reward outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

An instrument consisting of ninety items was devised to measure the variables. The various items were selected from standardized tests, the reliability and validity for each having been previously established. Task simplicity was measured using the Task Description Questionnaire.[7] The items measuring leader behavior were selected by Stinson and Johnson from the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire.[8] Need for achievement and need for autonomy were measured using instruments developed by Steers and Braunstein.[9] Expectancy I and expectancy II were

measured by items taken from the Expectancy Perception Questionnaire.[10] Items to measure satisfaction with supervisor and satisfaction with work were taken from the Role Orientation Index.[11] The reliabilities of the instruments used in this study were established by a pilot study conducted in three television stations in West Virginia. Reliability co-efficients for the eight sections of the survey instrument ranged from .50 to .95, with six of the sections ranging between .78 and .95.

The sample was composed of 502 employees from twenty television stations located in Alabama, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The stations were selected because of their reasonable proximity to Athens, Ohio, the site from which the research was conducted. No attempt was made to randomize the markets in which the stations were located. It was concluded, however, that there was a serendipitious mixture of stations by market size, i.e., large (top 25), medium (25-75), and small (75-down); and by network or non-network affiliation which was judged to be reasonably representative.

Prior to the beginning of the study in January, 1977, the general managers of each of forty-four television stations was contacted, and permission requested for employees to participate in the study. After permission was obtained from twenty of the stations, one of the investigators visited each station for the purpose of delivering the survey instruments. Sufficient instruments were left with the station manager for each of his employees, with the request that they be distributed to all employees. The instructions which attended the instruments

asked the respondents to complete the instruments at their earliest convenience, and to return them to the researchers in the postage-paid envelope provided for that purpose. Their anonymity was assured. A total of 1,066 instruments were distributed, and 502 were returned, a response rate of 47%.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data were analyzed using product-moment correlations between the predictor variables and the criterion variables. Significance was determined at $p < .01$. The results of the correlation analysis is reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1
CORRELATION ANALYSIS
(N = 502)

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variables			
	Satis. with Work	Satis. with Super.	E I	E II
Task Simplicity	-.39*	-.20*	-.10	-.29*
Instrumental Leader Behavior	.18	.15	.04	.15
Supportive Leader Behavior	.27*	.73*	.12	.46*
Need for Achievement	.25*	.02	.30*	.31*
Need for Autonomy	-.11	-.10	-.08	-.05

*Significant at $p < .01$.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A study of the correlation analysis and a comparison with

similar data generated in studies in other entrepreneural settings indicates that the job-related attitudes of persons who work in commercial broadcast stations are not notably different from those of persons who are employed in other commercial enterprises.[12] Persons who perceived their jobs as relatively simple were generally dissatisfied with both their work and with their supervisors. They tended to have negative attitudes regarding the expectancies of their jobs; they did not feel that exceptional effort would produce a high level of performance, nor would it lead to desirable rewards.

The subordinates' reaction to the perceived style of leadership on the part of their supervisors was a common one. Those subordinates whose leaders were perceived to be friendly and supportive of their efforts reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs and with their supervisors. This finding would also support the notion that a supervisor who is supportive of his subordinates will find that such attitudes will result in increased effort on the part of the subordinates, and, consequently, increased output, as evidenced by the relatively high correlation noted between supportive leader behavior and E II.

The findings for the variable "need for achievement" were notable. Those respondents who reported a high need for achievement were relatively satisfied with their work. They also felt that increased effort would produce high performance and desired rewards. Those respondents who reported a high need for autonomy in their jobs exhibited negative attitudes for all the criterion

variables, though not to a statistically significant degree. They were generally dissatisfied with their jobs and with their supervisors; they also felt that increased effort would not yield high performance or the rewards they valued most.

Some observations are possible. One of the major purposes of the study was to determine to what extent leadership styles and attitudinal evaluations relative to jobs in commercial television stations were similar to those same relationships as observed in other test settings. The findings bore a marked similarity to previous findings in other settings.[13] This suggests, therefore, that the improved management techniques and techniques designed to improve workers' attitudes toward their jobs and work roles which have been successfully applied in other settings might possibly be successful in commercial television stations. The improvement in attitudes toward jobs and supervisors which have been affected in other areas of study could be realized in the commercial television station, and would provide a possible solution to the excessively high turnover rate previously noted. For example, previous studies have shown that increased operating costs are the result of employee dissatisfaction with their jobs and with their supervisors.[14] If station managers can identify, on a systematic, empirical basis, those employees who register high levels of dissatisfaction in these areas, remedial steps such as job enrichment could be implemented. Efficiency, productivity, and job satisfaction are directly linked to job expectancies. If the worker can be lead to perceive that his efforts in his job

and work role will achieve higher performance and, thus, greater rewards, he will be motivated to perform his tasks with efficiency and with a positive orientation toward his work role.

We believe that the study has applicability for both the practitioner of broadcasting and for the teacher of broadcast station management. The practitioner can use these data and any data generated by subsequent studies to improve his own management techniques, and, as a result, the attitudes of his supervisors and employees to the end that excessive employee turnover is reduced. Broadcast educators can use these findings to incorporate into courses dealing with station management segments of course content which will more adequately prepare future television station managers for their managerial roles.

SUMMARY

We feel that this study has special significance for those involved in broadcast station management as either practitioners or as educators. It demonstrates rather conclusively that the relationships between leadership style and subordinates' attitudes toward certain aspects of their professional positions and work roles is essentially no different than those relationships that have been shown to exist in other industrial settings. It provides a substantial basis for the inference that improved management techniques which have proved to be successful in creating more positive attitudes toward management and work role in other areas will very likely have the same result in television stations. This is, however, a pilot study; it is essentially an exploratory study which needs

to be replicated in both television stations and radio stations. Nevertheless, we feel that it is an important first step which can provide a basis for additional contributions to the body of literature in the fields of organizational behavior and broadcast education.

REFERENCES

1. Fulmer, J. G. and Bensman, M. A. "Turnover in TV Industry Too High." Feedback, (May, 1978), pp. 17-19.
2. Kitross, John M. (ed.). "Stability." Journal of Broadcasting, (Summer, 1962), pp. 189-190.
3. Rhea, J. W. "An Investigation of Relationships Among Specified Variables in the Management of Television Stations." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio University, 1970.
4. Hulbert, J. H. "An Introduction to the A.P.B.E. - N.A.B. Broadcasting Employment Study." Journal of Broadcasting, (Summer, 1962), pp. 163-168.
5. Bennett, E. "Management Types and Communicative Behavior." Unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1969.
6. Oyewale, G. G. "A Study of Leadership and Effectiveness in Educational Broadcasting." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1972.
7. Stinson, J. E. and Johnson, T. W. "Tasks, Individual Differences, and Job Satisfaction." Industrial Relations, October, 1977, pp. 315-322.
8. Stinson, J. E. and Johnson, T. W. "The Path-Goal Theory of Leadership: A Partial Test and Suggested Refinement." Academy of Management Journal, 1975, pp. 242-252.
9. Steers, R. M. and Braunstein, D. "A Behaviorally Based Measure of Manifest Needs in Work Settings." Journal of Vocational Behavior, 1976, pp. 251-266.

10. Sims, H. P., Jr. "Work-Related Expectancies: A Multivariate and Causal Analysis." Working Paper, The Pennsylvania State University, 1976.

11. Johnson, T. W. and Garer, G. "Organizational Assimilation and Role Rejection." Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 1973, pp. 72-87.

12. Stinson and Johnson, 1975; Stinson and Johnson, 1977.

13. Ibid.

14. Work in America. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1973.